

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2023

Chancellor John B. King, Jr.
The State University of New York
State University Plaza
Albany, New York 12246

Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
City University of New York
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017

President Andrew Hamilton
New York University
70 Washington Square South
New York, NY 10012

National Association of Independent Colleges
and Universities (on behalf of NYC Colleges
and Universities)
1025 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 700,
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Chancellor King, Chancellor Rodríguez, President Hamilton, and New York City College Presidents:

As the home of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, we are proud that New York has welcomed migrants with the dignity and respect afforded to many of our families who arrived here from other countries. We write to urge you as the leaders of City colleges and universities to work cooperatively with local, state, and federal leaders to help provide housing for asylum seekers, and to conduct an audit of available space on your campuses that may be suitable to provide shelter for new arrivals. During the summer, many of your institutions have empty dorm rooms, student apartments, and other potentially appropriate places for shelter that can serve as much-needed temporary housing for migrants. We also ask for your help as we work with local leaders to provide food assistance and other necessities as well as pro bono legal assistance to migrant families arriving in New York.

As you know, more than 65,000 asylum seekers have arrived in New York, many after having experienced dangerous and traumatizing journeys in search of refuge.¹ New York City has mobilized to provide these families shelter by opening at least 140 emergency shelters and nine large-scale humanitarian relief centers.² The City is utilizing more than 150 sites, the vast majority being midsized hotels, to shelter more than 41,000 asylum seekers currently in the city's care.³

¹ *Mayor Adams Announces Launch of Asylum Seeker Arrival Center, Ninth Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center to Continue to Respond to Asylum Seeker Influx.* NYC. May 13, 2023. <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/333-23/mayor-adams-launch-asylum-seeker-arrival-center-ninth-humanitarian-emergency-response> ; Julie Turkewitz. *A Girl Loses Her Mother in the Jungle, and a Migrant Dream Dies.* New York Times. Nov. 17, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/world/americas/migrants-darien-gap.html>

² *Mayor Adams Announces Launch of Asylum Seeker Arrival Center, Ninth Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center to Continue to Respond to Asylum Seeker Influx.* NYC. May 13, 2023. <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/333-23/mayor-adams-launch-asylum-seeker-arrival-center-ninth-humanitarian-emergency-response>

³ Janice Yu. *NYC Officials say City is Running Out of Room for Migrants.* ABC7. May 18, 2023. <https://abc7ny.com/nyc-migrants-hotels-gyms/13263937/>

In addition, the Roosevelt Hotel is now being converted to an emergency migrant shelter and twenty school gyms are being considered for temporary housing.⁴ Every day New Yorkers and nonprofits are working to ensure that migrant families arriving in New York have shelter, food, clothing, access to legal services, and health care.⁵ As more families continue to arrive in New York, it is critical that all sectors of our society, including the private sector and institutions of higher education, also support the City's commitment to providing these basic necessities to migrant families. Reports indicate that New York State is considering SUNY campuses as a place to temporarily house families.⁶

Many of your institutions also have prestigious law schools, medical facilities, and admit students who are committed to public service. We encourage you to develop programs that incentivize and support faculty and students to volunteer their time and talent to serve asylum seekers and their children. State governors such as Florida's Ron DeSantis and Texas' Greg Abbott would like us to turn against each other and embrace anti-immigrant sentiments. We must show the rest of the country that when all sectors of our society come together, we can live up to our highest values and ideals as we welcome new immigrants to our community.

Sincerely,



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

⁴ Deepti Hajela and Bobby Caina Calvan. *NYC Converting Historic Roosevelt Hotel to Emergency Migrant Shelter*. NBC New York. May 14, 2023. <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/investigations/migrant-crisis/nyc-converting-historic-roosevelt-hotel-to-emergency-migrant-shelter/4332405/>; Jake Offenhartz. *'Drastic' Crisis May Force NYC to Use 20 School Gyms to House Migrants, Sparking Anger*. NBC New York. May 17, 2023. <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/investigations/migrant-crisis/drastic-crisis-may-force-nyc-to-use-20-school-gyms-to-house-migrants-prompting-uproar/4341332/>

⁵ Jasmine Garsd. *Asylum Dreams Remain Elusive for Tens of Thousands of Migrants Bused to New York*. NPR. March 12, 2023. <https://www.npr.org/2023/03/12/1158834874/asylum-dreams-remain-elusive-for-tens-of-thousands-of-migrants-bused-to-new-york>

⁶ James Battaglia. *Gov. Hochul Considers SUNY Campuses for Temporary Migrant Housing*. Rochester First. May 17, 2023. <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/new-york-state/gov-hochul-considers-suny-campuses-for-temporary-migrant-housing/>